Interview with David B. Funderburk

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR DAVID B. FUNDERBURK

Interviewed by: Dr. Henry E. Mattox

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[Note: This text was not edited by Ambassador Funderburk.]

Q: Mr. Ambassador, since this is a discussion on the Foreign Service, just for the record I will read a couple of things out here. You were born in Virginia. You have degrees from Wake Forest. And a doctorate from South Carolina; that's in history, is it?

FUNDERBURK: Right. In International Studies, actually.

Q: International Studies?

FUNDERBURK: That's right.

Q: And you have taught at Wingate College in North Carolina. You've taught at the University of South Carolina, at Columbia, Columbia U. Is that right?

FUNDERBURK: No. No, I didn't teach there.

Q: No. Hardin-Simmons?

FUNDERBURK: Hardin-Simmons.

Q: And here at Campbell?

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: Over a period from 1967 to 1981. And you were ambassador to Romania from 1981 to '85. Let me ask you, then, first, what was it that started off your interest in international affairs, that led you eventually to being named ambassador in Bucharest?

FUNDERBURK: Well, to go back to childhood, I grew up with my mother in a small town in North Carolina. She was the school teacher and a World Book Encyclopedia salesperson. She worked in two or three jobs, but we had World Book Encyclopedias in the house, and I used to read through these country after country. I lived in a room by myself, had three sisters. In my room, on the wall, was wall paper, a map of the world. And I just remember a very intense interest and fascination with geography and history and the study of the people of the world. So then I looked through the countries of the world in this World Book Encyclopedia and on the map and so forth, and studied this through the years. In college, I developed an interest in history and international affairs. And what really led me to Eastern Europe, which is my area of expertise and special interest, was study under a professor in undergraduate school at Wake Forest University, study under a professor whose field was, actually, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Romania, in particular. And so it really didn't hit me at the moment. I certainly started to develop an interest in it; saw it as an exotic area, an area that had a history of tragedy—the Romanians as an island of Latins in a sea of Slavs, and so forth.

And so some years later, I decided to pursue it and got grants for the study of the Romanian language. And my wife and I went from North Carolina to California one summer and studied the Romanian language. The next summer drove to Seattle, Washington, and studied it again. And then after that received a Fulbright grant for study in Romania for a year. And the ball kept rolling after that in terms of research grants and study grants in that part of the world. We also took advantage of being in that part of

Europe to see other countries, to visit other ones there. In fact, my doctoral dissertation was on relations between England and Romania, so we spent some time in the archives in Great Britain, as well. So that's pretty much how the interest developed in that part of the world.

Q: That's an interesting development of personal interest, or personal relations with one given country, Romania. When you first went there, did the country seem to be all that you'd expected? Was it as interesting as you expected that it would be, the first time you ever arrived?

FUNDERBURK: Well, it was certainly fascinating, and certainly interesting. I don't know how you could quantify how you expected it to be, really not having been in that part of the world before. But, it's . . .

Q: Were you disappointed in anything?

FUNDERBURK: Well, I was certainly disappointed in the way the system impacted on the people in the country. But in terms of just individual relationships, in terms of the general hospitality of the people, the friendliness of the people, especially as you got outside the major city, the capital, their customs, their history, their way of life, the music, heritage and so forth, this was all very fascinating and very interesting, and just whetted our appetite, really, for more study and more involvement with the people there.

Q: And what was the year that you first went to Romania?

FUNDERBURK: 1971-'72 on a Fulbright was our first trip there.

Q: Let me back up just a little bit before we get off on that again. Would we have guessed that you would develop this kind of interest from the training and background and interest of your grandparents on either side?

FUNDERBURK: Not at all.

Q: Were they from North Carolina as well?

FUNDERBURK: My father was a native South Carolinian with a name of German origin. I'm eighth generation Funderburk, which was Vonderburg traced back to the western part of Germany. They had settled in South Carolina 200 years ago, as a matter of fact, and on the border of North and South Carolina. My mother was actually from the mountains in North Carolina, Transylvania County. And politically she descended from the Lincoln Republicans in that area, the unionists, whereas my father was a Democrat. But she was of English and some German origin. So there was no Romanian ethnic origin or East European ethnic origin, actually, that would have pointed to any of this.

Q: Well, what about their interests, your parents' or your grandparents'? Were they farmers, or were they school teachers, or were they writers, or what kind of background is that?

FUNDERBURK: Well, my grandfather was a farmer and had quite a big plantation with a great grandfather in South Carolina. And my dad was a theologian, with a Ph. D. in theology from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His brothers and sisters became school teachers, preachers and attorneys. So they covered quite a gamut there. My mother was a school teacher. There was really no other type of interest that would direct him back in that area. He was in the war, World War II, but he was in the Pacific theater.

Q: Well, the intellectual bent was there.

FUNDERBURK: Intellectual bent was, right. The fascination with books, from both parents, certainly was there, and that was imparted to us—reading—how important reading was, finding out about the world.

Q: Was your trip to Romania in '71 the first time you'd been abroad?

FUNDERBURK: For any length of time. I mean, I had been to Mexico, but I hadn't really been abroad to Europe or Africa, or anywhere like that.

Q: Well, by the time that President Reagan was elected, and a new administration was coming in, in 1981, you had, by then, already a rather long acquaintance with the country of Romania, and a long period of study and teaching in that field. Why was it, do you think, that your appointment as ambassador to Bucharest occasioned so much controversy?

FUNDERBURK: Well, simply because I was being sponsored, primarily, by Senator Jesse Helms, and some other southern conservatives. The fact that Senator Helms had held up the nominations of some of the favorite golden boys of the Foreign Service certainly meant that in order to try to get retribution from Senator Helms, they were going to do tit for tat. So, in other words, when Senator Helms held up the nomination of Lawrence Eagleburger for various positions, many people in the Foreign Service took it upon themselves to say, “Well, we should inform some Senators to do the same to Senator Helms' nominees.” So it was simply the fact that I was a favorite of Senator Helms and Strom Thurmond and a few other southern conservatives. I don't think it had that much to do with me personally. Nobody knew about me personally. And when I got into the Senate Foreign Relations hearings, people from Chuck Percy to Howard Baker to others were very friendly and said, “We're amazed that here is a political appointee who's been to the country and knows the language of the country.” So they thought this was an asset, and this would be a good thing. But it was a political thing.

Q: It didn't have to do with your relative youth?

FUNDERBURK: No. This was basically dismissed as not being a paramount factor in view of the fact that I had lived in that country four years and knew something of the language, had written a dissertation about it, many articles, and so forth. So the familiarity with the country itself, and the people seemed to outweigh this youth concern. There were some others who were appointed during that same year who were about the same age.

Q: Well, also there was one other factor that perhaps we could raise, that it was usually a post to which a careerist was sent, someone on the level of Harry Barnes, for example, at that time one of our senior and very able officers.

FUNDERBURK: Yes.

Q: But as you point out in your book, as your cover, somewhat and fairly comprehensively in your book, Pinstripes in Red, those problems were overcome and off you went. There is one other thing, though, about those problems. Did you express to Senator Helms your wish to go there as ambassador, or did you wish some other possibility in the Government?

FUNDERBURK: My initial request, or preference, was to be head of the Office of Eastern Europe inside the State Department, or the Bureau of East European Affairs. And, in fact, after the election of Ronald Reagan, Senator Helms' office said, “Would you list some positions that you might be interested in?” And I listed about six places, and I think fourth on the list was ambassador to Romania. I hadn't really given that much thought. And so my name was thrown in the hopper by seven senators who endorsed my nomination, and the Heritage Foundation, and some other groups, some generals and other friends of mine. My name was thrown in initially to be in the East European area of the State Department. And, eventually, some many months later, I got a telephone call from White House personnel saying that the position that I was opting for was really a career position. And . . . [chuckles]

Q: And compared to an ambassadorship, it was fairly far down in the picking order?

FUNDERBURK: Yes.

Q: Did you find it personally distasteful to have to jump over these hurdles to get the nomination for the ambassadorship?

FUNDERBURK: Well, I wouldn't say distasteful, but it certainly was a period of some trauma and uncertainty in our family in which there was some concern and anxiety, being unsure of whether the nomination was going to be held up indefinitely or going to be shot down, and worry over being treated unfairly by the media just looking for sensationalism, and maybe from leaks of people in the Foreign Service who resented a political appointee to such a position.

Q: You know as well as I that there have been a number, over the years, of political appointees who had no qualifications whatever.

FUNDERBURK: Sure. There are many right now whose only qualification is that they gave $150,000.00 to the Bush campaign.

Q: Well, in personal terms, certainly, it's perhaps unfortunate that someone who is clearly qualified for a position has to be locked in with everybody else. Now on your tour in Bucharest—you were there for quite a while, longer than some ambassadors are at post—I'd like to get some of your views on the issues, the problems that you faced. I'd like to get into some of the specifics of what you saw and what you did. I'd like to get from you some unreported information, some of your insights that are not included in your written work. The scholar of the future can go to this book and to your other writings, but I would like for them to have something to draw from in the transcription of these conversations as well. What was the prime issue that you saw, then, when you first went to Bucharest?

FUNDERBURK: Well, there were many issues involved in the relationship or, you know, duties of an ambassador, as well. I mean, you're looking out for the interests of the United States in that particular country. So our interests were economic, in terms of trade between the two countries. Romania had Most Favored Nation Treaty status, and it was one of just two or three communist countries that had it; and this put it in a special category. So this was paramount in the relationship, the trade and the economic relationship. But, increasingly, the fact that we were observing there, and I had, from

the fact that I had lived with a Romanian family, and it felt like that I had certainly been out among the people much more than, normally, those living in the elitist enclave of an American Embassy would get out. We were picking up the fact that Ceausescu, who was becoming the president of Romania, was becoming increasingly repressive and paranoid and maniacal in terms of destruction of churches, murder of pastors and priests, desecration of cemeteries, for example.

Q: Increasingly in comparison with what? The previous year? The previous decade?

FUNDERBURK: Compared with his earlier years in office and maybe even compared with some neighboring Balkan and East European countries. So what we observed and what I felt should be very important in our relationship, living up to America's ideals and principles and beliefs, was that, actually, the deplorable and increasingly deplorable human rights situation in Romania should be a factor in a relationship in which we consider—that is the State Department—officially consider Ceausescu to be favored in Eastern Europe. And he was one who was rewarded because of some so-called maverick status. So in addition to the trade and the economic relationship, I think the fact that the human right situation was so much worse than had ever been reported back in the media in the United States, or than the State Department considered it to be, this was a major factor that increasingly frustrated myself and some other people who would consider themselves believers and concerned about individual human beings.

Q: You make that point abundantly clear in your book, which is interesting reading. I'm trying to get to your mind set in 1981, when you first went out. Did you see it then, the need to get tougher with Romania as a number-one policy issue that faced you upon arrival at post?

FUNDERBURK: Well, I wouldn't say I saw it the first day, but I would certainly say that as time went along, in the post, evidence increased, through intelligence and every means of collection, that showed how bad the situation was becoming. Not only that, but how bad

the people were in terms of food availability, in terms of housing conditions, in terms of heating and so forth. But it wasn't something that just, “bang!” slapped me the moment I got off the airplane. I had been there before. I had heard from other people. I had seen how some families lived. And I knew that things were getting worse and worse and worse. But in terms of there being any hope that we might be able to reason with this individual in charge of Romania, or with the leadership there, this we tried. I tried everything that I could through the system, initially.

Q: Is it not the fact—I'm just saying this for argument sake anyway—is it not the fact that the human rights situation was poor and the morale of the people was bad, more a reflection of the system there and in other various and sundry other countries than any particular repressive policies of the moment on the part of Ceausescu?

FUNDERBURK: No. I think it was really due to a deliberate, planned policy of the Ceausescu clan to totally control and dominate and make the people in that country totally dependent, let's say, on the state itself, totally dependent on Ceausescu. Ceausescu came to consider himself as a God, in effect, in the eyes of the people, in his own eyes. He really thought that he was. He thinks that he is. And so he felt the people were not working hard enough. They weren't producing enough. They were getting paid too much. They had too much, even though they were getting worse and worse off. Because he was thinking, in his mind, of the "30s and the hard times that he had, let's say, whatever they were. So it was a plan for him to industrialize Romania in Stalinistic fashion, to bring about heavy industry there, regardless of what he had, these big elephantine projects that are really anachronistic. You know, a hydroelectric plant that's not productive, a canal that takes twenty years to build that's not going to have any business on it when it gets completed. These type of grandiose projects were things that he had designed for greatness for Romania, so he would be the Tito of the Balkans, the great statesman worldwide. And he considered himself to be—and this was his little fiefdom, the people in Romania. They wanted to breed these people so there would be more people for factories and cannon fodder for the military. And the atmosphere became one of total fear,

intimidation, paranoia among the population. Everybody believed, whether it was true or not, they were convinced that every third person worked for the Secret Police. Everybody looked over their shoulders. Everybody lived a lie. Everyone had two faces, one for the public and one for one or two trusted friends in private. This was an atmosphere that, after a while, just became heavier and heavier, more depressing, to the point that mentally and psychologically and spiritually people were basically just beaten into submission, and felt that they had given up everything that was real as a part of their humanity. And that, as I state in the book, that they had to sell their soul, in effect, in order to survive physically. Just to get a crumb of bread, just to be able to survive, they had to kiss people throughout society and bribe and cheat and steal as a way of life. And this is what, not only the system in place—and I would argue that that's a major factor—and the communist system, in my view, does this everywhere, even in the most advanced and reformed areas such as Poland.

Q: As we can see this illustrated by the movement toward reform.

FUNDERBURK: Right. So the system is certainly an element in it. There's no question about it. It's just that Ceausescu was, in my view, a logical result of the worst that can happen in that system. In other words, the Kim Il-Sungs, the Pol Pots, the Stalins, and the Ceausescu are in a similar bag of extremes that can very logically happen in a communist system, but not necessarily in some other systems. They happen in a system where the party has virtually total control through means of a secret police and the military. And so it was something that the man's own insanity and paranoia and ego contributed to distorting, I would say.

Q: Give me, and give the scholar who may be reading these words some day a word picture of Ceausescu, the man.

FUNDERBURK: Well, the man who thinks that he's God doesn't want to hear criticism. So an American official, Secretary of State, Vice President, whoever, comes over and

visits Ceausescu, they are being advised by the State Department, obviously, to bring good news to this man and to congratulate this man and praise him, because that's what he wants to hear. No one wants to be the bearer of ill will or bad tidings to Nicolae Ceausescu, because if you are, if you even try to subtly slip in some criticism of this guy and the way he's running his fiefdom, he goes virtually berserk right before your eyes.

Q: Give me an example. I mean give me an instance. You've been in his presence any number of times. Give me an instance of when he goes off the deep end.

FUNDERBURK: Well, I would say where you have a, let's say, an Alexander Haig as Secretary of State, who is meeting with Ceausescu, and he tries to slip in there that, “Look, we're different. We have to deal with the US Congress who reflect the views of the people. They're concerned about human rights, religion, things like this. So if they see that these things are happening over here, you know, you could do better and you could help your case, get more money, more trade, more favored treatment and so forth if you play the game right. In other words, if you lay off on these things, and you show a better projection of your human rights treatment.” Ceausescu takes this personally, and offensively.

Q: In the meeting that you had, you and Haig and Ceausescu, who else was there? That was in '81? '82?

FUNDERBURK: '82, right.

Q: Who else was there?

FUNDERBURK: Well, probably the DCM from the embassy and whoever was in Al Haig's entourage.

Q: Well, all right. How many were there then?

FUNDERBURK: I would say there were about six people, probably.

Q: Okay.

FUNDERBURK: Although we had a luncheon, at which there were a similar number. There was Ceausescu and Al Haig and myself, and with him probably the Vice President of Romania. Their Foreign Minister was there.

Q: Was the conversation in Romanian or English?

FUNDERBURK: The conversations were in both languages.

Q: Did you use professional translators, interpreters?

FUNDERBURK: The Romanians provided the translators, that's right.

Q: But you were able to check on the translation?

FUNDERBURK: Right. That's right.

Q: Anybody else on the staff speak Romanian fluently?

FUNDERBURK: Most people on our staff who had been there for a while had made an effort to try to learn the language. So they knew something of the language.

Q: Well, a little knowledge can be very dangerous. Were there other members of the staff who spoke it fluently enough to be relied on to check a translation of something extremely important of that sort?

FUNDERBURK: From time to time we would have someone whose skills were sufficient to be able to check this. You know, either from the political or USIS branch of the embassy. Let's say, particularly there because they would stay longer than most people. And I would point out that in a conversation like this, where something was said that was of slightly

a critical nature of Ceausescu, or suggesting improvement, that often the Romanian translator, interpreter, would leave out this part. That was very obvious to us. [laughter]

Q: Did you point this out at the time, when sitting there?

FUNDERBURK: No, I didn't.

Q: No, of course, it wouldn't be diplomatic courtesy.

FUNDERBURK: It wouldn't be, no. [chuckles]

Q: When you were sitting there with Haig and Ceausescu, and he became very annoyed at what Haig was saying, assuming the translator gave him, at least, some of it . . .

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: How did he react exactly?

FUNDERBURK: He reacted by stuttering and clicking his teeth, and by flailing his arms around, basically Nixon-like gestures.

Q: Do you mean he became obviously angry?

FUNDERBURK: Right. Obviously, overtly angry and animated, turning red, let's say. If he did such a thing I can't recall, but certainly he would turn red with anger.

Q: We all know what his picture looks like, but how tall a fellow is he? What kind of physical impression did he make on you?

FUNDERBURK: He makes the impression of a very ordinary person, very short. Probably, I noticed a picture of him yesterday, as a matter of fact, with the other Warsaw Pact leaders. He was the shortest of them. He's probably 5'5”, or something like that. Perhaps as a Napoleonic complex, because of how short he is. So he's very ordinary in that sense,

probably even bordering on ugly, I think I've described him. A very stern face, very serious demeanor. Otherwise, nothing really very distinctive about him, except his mannerisms, I would say, in terms of him in the population.

Q: Well, there must be something there, though. He's shrewd? Intelligent? What?

FUNDERBURK: Oh, there are a lot of characteristics that certainly led to him being in the position he's been in. I mean, he was one of the, probably, 400 native, indigenous communists of the Communist Party in Romania prior to World War II. When there were almost no communists of Romanian origin in Romania, he was one of the handful. He was also very astute in terms of grabbing and maintaining power, which is something communists excel at. They go through a process of purges and killing off enemies or opposition within the party, and then by the time they've made it to the top leadership, they're in pretty good shape for wielding power and manipulating people. And there's no question that Ceausescu instills fear in people. He is shrewd. He is intelligent in a lot of ways. He is a power monger, and one who certainly knows how to, I would say, psychologically punch the buttons of people that he is dealing with and talking with. He does, or at least his aides, do their research in terms of whoever they're dealing with, far greater than I think our people do. So that when he's sitting down with Al Haig, he knows far more about Al Haig than Haig knows about him. He knows what button to push to get the support or the sympathy or empathy of Al Haig. And so in this sense, he's very shrewd, very astute. He also kind of has—the Romanians laugh at him on the one hand. They're very fearful. They're very intimidated. But at the same time, they say, “Well, he's a graduate of the third grade. He's virtually illiterate. He's stutters when he speaks. He can't pronounce Romanian properly.” And so they kind of laugh behind his back about this. But at the same time he's overcome whatever problems he had in that regard, in terms of his ability to maintain power. Maybe because of his background, he's always been anti-intellectual. And so he's purged and been very tough on the cultural element and the intellectual people inside Romania.

Q: Does he have public speaking ability?

FUNDERBURK: I would say that it's very poor. And I think most Romanians would say that. Now, a communist leader doesn't really have to have public speaking ability. I mean, maybe Castro has the ability to sway people through the power of his speech. Ceausescu does not have this ability, a Stalin's ability, a Lenin's ability, or a Castro's. Ceausescu doesn't have it at all, to really influence or persuade anyone just on the basis of the power and charisma of what he has to say and what he projects; not at all. It's more a cynical resentment, a seething resentment on the part of the people when they hear him speak. And they kind of laugh, mockingly, I would say. Having said that, there still seems to be a measure of force and power in what the guy says.

Q: On the radio or on television?

FUNDERBURK: Right. Right. I mean, you know that he's the authority. And so, let's say, he speaks with authority, even if he doesn't speak correctly, you know, to the satisfaction of everybody.

Q: What language does he speak if he doesn't pronounce Romanian correctly?

FUNDERBURK: [chuckles] Well, they would probably say gypsy, but this is what the Romanians say, generally, in terms of how they denigrate in society, and they look down on gypsies, and they would say a corrupted form of Romanian. He doesn't speak any other languages well, that anyone knows of, except Russian. And he, apparently, learned some Russian during two years of working with the KGB inside the Soviet Union, which he has tried to hide, or obscure, you know, through history. So there are a few blank spots in earlier history that, at least for public consumption, no one knows where the guy was. Our records show that he was inside the Soviet Union.

Q: What two years were those?

FUNDERBURK: I'm not sure the exact years, but I think they were in the . . .

Q: During the "40s?

FUNDERBURK: Late "40s, under the post-war communist rulers there. I would say '49 to '51, but I'm not exactly sure.

Q: Now, of course, an ambassador abroad often deals more with the Foreign Minister than he will with the head of state. Who was the Foreign Minister there with whom you had most contact? Who was Foreign Minister while you were there?

FUNDERBURK: Stefan Andrei was the Foreign Minister during virtually all the time that I was there. And he was a younger man than Ceausescu. He was a ladies man. He was a guy who, much more obviously than most, would dare inside of communist Romania, who like to flaunt and flash Western trappings of capitalism, such as, you know, let's say a Rolex-type watch, or rings or diamond-studded cigarette lighters, this type of thing. In Romania, tobacco was king. Kent cigarettes is currency. And he always had some fancy cigarettes and fancy cases and cigarette lighters and so forth, bracelets and other type things. He had a very young wife, as well, who was an actress, who wore low-cut dresses, very well endowed. And this made Ceausescu's wife very unhappy because she was envious. She wanted to be the queen of Romania, Elena Ceausescu, and she didn't want competition from this other broad, Mrs. Andrei.

Q: A N D R E I?

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: Yes.

FUNDERBURK: And Andrei was very, I would say, far more intelligent, far more sophisticated, in terms of dealing with the West and Western types, than Ceausescu himself.

Q: Had he served abroad?

FUNDERBURK: I don't think so. I mean, it's a possibility.

Q: Had he come up through the Foreign Office?

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: So he had served some pledgeships somewhere or another?

FUNDERBURK: Right. And he knew, I think if memory serves me correctly, Andrei knew French pretty well, which is rather common for the educated elite in Bucharest.

Q: Is it true what I've always heard, that Romanian is fairly close to French?

FUNDERBURK: Right. It is. It does have a similarity. The Romanian people have considered themselves Francophiles, and Bucharest has been considered the Paris of the Balkans, Paris of the East. The boulevards in Bucharest are patterned after Paris. There is Arc de Triumph in Bucharest that looks like the one in Paris. People, especially 19th Century and into the 20th Century pre-war generation of intellectuals in Romania, all spoke French.

Q: No. I meant the two languages.

FUNDERBURK: Right. The two languages have quite a similarity. I was leading to that, in part, because the Romanians actually took, lock, stock and barrel, a lot of words right out of French and just stuck them in the Romanian language. But the Romanian language is Latin-based. But it's kind of a Romanized Latin, they say, from the Roman colonists,

who were in Dacia, there right after the 200s. So that there are some Slavic words in the language, maybe up to 25% percent, but it's a Latin language that is spoken more like Italian, but if you're reading it, it has quite a bit in common with French. So you're absolutely right.

Q: Well, Andrei, the Foreign Minister, was he a useful contact? Was he an efficient contact? Could you get things done through him when you were instructed to do so by the Department?

FUNDERBURK: Well, that's a very good question. You could to some degree. I think there were actually other people in the Foreign Ministry who were more helpful than Andrei, because you didn't normally get Andrei with a minor problem. You only went to him with something very major. He was afraid to do anything that would veer off the reservation from his boss, his mentor, Ceausescu. So in this sense, no real favors from Andrei other than words, but no deeds. So it would be underlings under him in the North American Bureau of the Foreign Ministry there who would be more amenable to everyday discussions with us about a human rights case, an immigration case, a problem irritant in the relationship.

Q: How did you decide who you were going to send from the embassy to call on the Foreign Ministry or whether you were going to call on someone in the Foreign Ministry yourself? Did you decide simply on ad hoc basis, or did you have a set of issues that you delegated to somebody else? How did you work that in your embassy?

FUNDERBURK: We normally took the DCM. That is, I would go to the Foreign Ministry for a major issue with the DCM because the DCM had been a political officer, and he had also been a political officer in Romania. So that this made him the ideal, logical person there. On occasion, in his absence, or even when he was there, a top political officer would go. Or if the issue was simply trade-related, then a top economic officer would go. But ordinarily, it would be the DCM or the chief political officer.

Q: Who was your DCM?

FUNDERBURK: Frank Corry. Actually, there were two. Sam Frye was there initially. And then Frank Corry, for most of the time.

Q: What kind of problem would you delegate yourself to go to the Foreign Ministry?

FUNDERBURK: You mean to see the Foreign Minister or just to see anybody?

Q: To the Foreign Ministry, anybody in the Foreign Ministry. I understand that for you to see the Foreign Minister, himself, it would have to be a fairly high-level question of some sort.

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: Below that, though, how did you decide whether you would have someone call or to get you an appointment yourself? It takes a lot of time. It takes driving over there and all that sort of thing.

FUNDERBURK: Right. Well, nine times out of ten, my visits to the Foreign Ministry would be in response to a call from the Foreign Ministry itself, summoning me to send a message to Washington urgently on . . .

Q: Now, that's interesting. That high a proportion.

FUNDERBURK: But the percentage of time that we went over there, it would be to register a complaint or to inform the Foreign Ministry, from our government, from Washington, of an upcoming visit or an upcoming issue that we were concerned about.

Q: Especially the U.N.?

FUNDERBURK: Sometimes it had to do with votes in the United Nations, and we were interested in Romania abstaining or, at least, being sympathetic with our position, not voting against us on it. So we would feel them out on that.

Q: What did they call you over for? You say this was more frequent.

FUNDERBURK: Well, again, the Romanians liked to travel, from Andrei to everybody in the Foreign Ministry, the Foreign Trade Ministry, and other ministries inside Romania, would be sending people to the United States, and each one would want to get an audience with the President. Or, in lieu of that, the Vice President or the Secretary of State. Or every time that there was a trip to the United States they would call us in and say, “Do your best. We've got to get in there to see the President, because we've got this urgent letter from Ceausescu.” What they really meant was the letter we've seen before. But, you see, personally I need to get in there because it enhances my status back home for Old Nici to know that I can get in. So they would always play this game with us. But we would be called in for visits, or if there was some problem with our relationship that they had picked up. For example, an incident of one of our military attach#s was apprehended by the Romanian military, and I was summoned to the Foreign Ministry. They complained about this to me.

Q: Because he was doing his job?

FUNDERBURK: Right. [chuckles]

Q: The prime issue that you saw in US-Romanian relations, at least after a while that you had been there, was the—what's the name of the policy differentiation?

FUNDERBURK: Right. That's the name of it.

Q: Romania gets special treatment, in certain respects, as did Yugoslavia, in certain respects, in comparison with Poland and Hungary and so on.

FUNDERBURK: Well, now, Poland and Hungary were in the same boat with Romania inside the Pact, except for the stretch of time when Poland was under martial law. But Poland had MFN. Hungary has it. And Romania had it. So those three were the Warsaw Pact countries with it, except for a time for Poland there. The ones, of course, Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, were the ones who didn't have it in Eastern Europe.

Q: A scholar can familiarize himself with your views, in detail, on this policy in your book, Pinstripes in Red. However, let me ask you here now, how is it that you came to be convinced that the United States really had sufficient leverage to cause Romania to change its internal policies, repressive as they became? How would the United States really have been able to do anything, one way or another, about the repressive regime of Ceausescu?

FUNDERBURK: Well, it's ironic the way you phrase that, because the State Department's argument through the years, the argument of the Foreign Service for rewarding this monster named Ceausescu, that virtually the whole world realizes now—Newsweek said this week “the last great Stalinist”—their whole argument through the years for differentiation toward Romania was that it provided leverage for the United States to help bring about a better way of life for the people, in terms of human rights, to help in terms of immigration of Jews and Germans and Romanians from Romania. This was their argument. But I would say, sure, the United States has a limited ability to affect the internal affairs of any country, and certainly Romania. The US has less influence over internal developments in Romania than any other country. But to answer your question in as much as I can in the way it's phrased, how did I come to believe that we had the ability to impact, or have leverage on internal affairs there, well, from the simple fact that Ceausescu and Romania need, desperately, hard currency, which is what Poland needs today. And Hungary needs it today. And the United States is a major provider of hard currency, or dollars. And they get that by having Most Favored Nation Treaty status, meaning, if they didn't have it, it would be the equivalent of some . . .

Q: Now, to back up. I think I lost some of that on tape. We were talking about the ability of the United States to effect change in other countries around the world, let's say, other than Canada or something of that sort.

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: And you were saying that the MFN is worth, more or less to Romania, how much?

FUNDERBURK: Anywhere from $300 to $600 million a year, in terms of trade subsidies and hard currency.

Q: A substantial amount. Is that the highest figure in hard currency that Romania gains from trade with any other country?

FUNDERBURK: Actually, I think they probably get more from West Germany. So I think we follow West Germany, but we're tied in together, in a sense. That is, if the Germans and the French and the British look on Romania favorably, then Americans tend to more so, and vice versa. So that if two of those countries break off relations, it's going to be very difficult for the other two to maintain them with Romania, usually. I would agree with your premise that the United States really doesn't have that much ability to influence internal events in other countries, but we do have some. I would call it marginal. And I would say that our influence in a place like Romania is more psychological and moral than it would be in other ways.

In other words, if the United States puts down a marker for human rights, and it states this through Radio Free Europe or Voice of America, it says it deplores the human rights conditions inside Romania, immigration is not free, we dislike the destruction of churches and the murder of pastors and priests, and that that will be a factor in our relationship, which helps determine MFN, then I think that this, symbolically, in playing futures and playing people, has an impact on what the people in that country think. And they certainly consider us to be living up to our ideals as the bastion of freedom and democracy, if we

take such stands. So morally, we have an influence, and it would impact to some degree on the communist ruler. But what really impacts on him is money, obviously. And so the State Department has argued that we have the leverage of helping get people out when we have MFN, but my argument, increasingly during my stay there and subsequent to the stay, was that MFN simply sent money into the coffers of this Stalinist, who used it to further repress the people, and it really didn't go to benefit the people. So we should withdraw MFN from that regime, and not give money and not be seen to be giving assistance to any regime that treats its people the way that one does.

Q: Well, just a question. We won't get off from this very much, but what about Poland? Do you think that a policy of differentiation has led to some of the loosening up of the regime there? Poland is just a different case or something?

FUNDERBURK: I don't think that America's policy, vis # vis Poland, has really been the major factor in bringing about the developments that are taking place in Poland or in Hungary. I think our policy has been a minor factor, but not a major factor. I think the major factor is that Gorbachev and his cohorts, when they came in, decided that, through PR and through Madison Avenue policy, projection, they needed to get American money. They needed to get American technology to help advance the Soviet Union into the 20th Century and to be competitive to some degree; that the system was in dire straits, in Poland, in the Soviet Union, throughout. And they needed to project to the West that things were changing. They had done this periodically in Soviet communist history. Khrushchev did it to some degree. You had peaceful coexistence. You had detente. You even had Lenin's NEP, New Economic Policy, in which they project a different face and say,”We're not Brezhnev. We're not thugs. We're not the invaders of Afghanistan and so forth. We're nice guys. We want your money. We want your technology.”

And so I think what's happening in Poland is more a result of the fact that Gorbachev and the leaders of the Soviet Union need to get our money and, therefore, have allowed a little bit of play room for the people inside Poland. I don't think for a moment that it means that

there will be, in reality, a non-communist government inside of Poland. The limits that any communist would have to lay down would be that Poland and Romania remain a member of the Warsaw Pact; that the Communist Party really be the power, whether it's behind the scenes or whether it's up front. The communists would have to control the organs of propaganda, secret police, the military, the defense and foreign policy of the country. I don't think there's any question about this. So if we got a token, titular leader named Lech Walesa—that's the head of Poland right now—it would not mean, at all, that you would really have a non-communist government in Poland, in my view.

Q: Well, I think he's got to be a little bit more than titular, and I think it is going to be quite startling, but . . .

FUNDERBURK: They've used him before and I think they're very well prepared to use him again, because he's made commitments to them already that he would not withdraw from the Warsaw Pact; that he wouldn't handle foreign and defense matters, pretty much, but yet he would help them get money from the west. And that's what they need. They don't want to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. And right now the goose is the Gorbachev image in the West, of reform and change, so they can get money, and so they can get technology. And he's doing very well. And we're, as always, very good suckers for this. [chuckles]

Q: When you were there, the US projected an image that was favorable to, at least, many Romanians in the streets. They looked to the United States as an example of democracy or freedom or something of the sort. Were there other countries that had an equally good image in Romania, such as France, for example, Great Britain?

FUNDERBURK: The United States had the ultimate image of freedom, democracy and salvation, for them. But they always have a fondness in their heart for the French. And so they do look to France, secondarily; less so to the British, the Italians, the West Germans. But despite the fact that the United States had officially wrapped itself around this tyrant,

Ceausescu, who was repressing the people; despite the fact that they knew we had pulled the rug out from under the Hungarians in 1956, and that we pull the rug out from under them periodically, through our broadcast and other ways, they still look to us. So, yes, I would say there is a reservoir of good will toward the United States that hasn't been destroyed by virtually every asinine policy we could come up with.

Q: What about the French? Have they pursued policies that you would have disagreed with if you had been French ambassador?

FUNDERBURK: I would say that the French, even to a greater extent than the United States, have let economics dictate their foreign policy with regard to Romania, playing on the fact that there is a cultural and linguistic affinity between the two peoples. But they have used this to advance their own ability to trade and do business with Romania. At the same time, on occasion, you would find the French, perhaps, taking a little tougher stand in terms of criticizing something going on in Romania they disliked, or something that was anathema to French interest. In other words, what I observed was that virtually ever other major Western power would come down strongly on the side of looking out for their own interest, to a greater extent than the United States would. The State Department, the career diplomats, for the most part, in the formulation of their policy, vis # vis, whatever country in the world, but certainly in that part where I have experience, were fearful and afraid to step on anybody's toes, even if it meant not looking out for your own interest. So that you wouldn't antagonize this guy who didn't want to be antagonized, you say nothing and you let your interest go to hell. So in other words, inside the embassy—let's talk about something petty, okay, but still important psychologically to the well being of American diplomats abroad—if the heat was cut off in the winter, if you were having trouble with mail shipments being broken into by this government, if you couldn't get help that you needed for plumbing and other things, the United States would do nothing to bring these matters up or do as little as possible to bring these matters up, for fear of antagonizing

the Romanian Communist Government. But the French would not dare let such a thing happen to their people, you see.

Q: You have personal experience, then, of such petty harassment that went unprotested?

FUNDERBURK: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Q: You were not able, as chief of mission, to take some of these things up?

FUNDERBURK: Well, I would go back and forth with the State Department about it, and they would say, “We don't want to bring this up at this time because it will just increase the irritation of the ones that are really favorite to us, and we want to save our markers for bigger issues,” something like that.

Q: And it couldn't be handled informally? If your heat is cut off, you couldn't sent the GSO over to . . .

FUNDERBURK: We did those things, right. But living for the Foreign Service in a country like Romania is hard enough, and the regime would try to make it as difficult as possible for you so that you would be preoccupied with that problem and you wouldn't really have time to get after them on bigger things. In the same way that people inside communist Romania or communist Poland or the Soviet Union spend half their time, or a great deal of their time, standing in long lines trying to get food, beef, and meat and other types of food. And this, in a way, is a deliberate policy of the government to preoccupy these people with this subsistence, rather than the political problems they have. [chuckles]

Q: Well, also it's a result of inefficiency?

FUNDERBURK: It's a function of inefficiency, as well. You're absolutely right.

Q: One little issue that seemed to raise its head occasionally while you were there was something about unfair trade practices, a complaint by US Steel. What was that about? Do you remember that?

FUNDERBURK: Well, we had several cases. Yes, I do. I mean, there were several cases in which the Romanians were dumping steel on the American market, undercutting American steel producers. They would sell roll steel, for example, they called it, cheaper than they were supposed to by the trade agreements that we had. And in the same way, they would go over their quotas of textile products, and there would be protests from textile producers in the United States. And then what would happen, instead of the United States looking out for the interests of US steel and the interest of the textile industry, here was Romania breaking the agreements that we had, okay, by shipping more than they were allowed to, by undercutting us, going over the quotas. We wouldn't do anything to help our own companies and factories because of fear of harming the political relationship with that country. So basically, in the final analysis, we would sit down and say, “Okay, we'll extend this agreement. We'll expand it. We'll let you go over quota this year.” And this is what happened year after year. The Romanians would push everything beyond the limit. Then we would sit down and talk and negotiate about it. And, other than maybe in a Congressional Record it being condemned as a footnote somewhere, that Romania was condemned and warned not to do this again, you know, there was really nothing that ever impacted on them. I mean, we didn't come down with penalties.

Q: Did commerce recommend that some kind of penalties be imposed?

FUNDERBURK: Very infrequently. Once or twice they did. But normally, commerce was there to try to promote trade and not to antagonize the Romanian Foreign Trade Ministry and foreign trade operatives. So they would have to be under tremendous pressure.

Q: No, I don't mean commerce in Bucharest; the commerce in Washington.

FUNDERBURK: The Department of Commerce, right. Well, I'm thinking of them via the commerce . . .

Q: Well, that raises a question. Reading your book and talking with you here today, a question is raised in my mind as to where you, as a practitioner in the field and a theoretician in the field, think policy should be made, abroad or at home? And I'm posing it so that it's really easy to shoot down the question.

FUNDERBURK: [chuckles] Right.

Q: But you do make a large number of comments that indicate to me that you think the cutting edge of policy really should be made by the people who are on the scene, the ambassador and his staff, in the country involved. The opposite, of course, is normally the argument. The opposite is normally the view of most anyone you can think of; policy should be made, or is made, should be made back in London, back in Washington, back in wherever the home office is.

FUNDERBURK: Well, the fact of the matter is policy is made in Washington, and very seldom is any type of policy made in the field, that I know of, or at least in the context where I was working. So that if I said that, what I would state, how I would restate it or rephrase it would be that I certainly would think that policy, as made in Washington, should factor in, and include, the views of the people in the field, whether they are an ambassador, the economic officer, the political officer. Being there first hand and working day to day with the people, they certainly ought to have a greater first-hand knowledge of what is going on, and this ought to be factored in. I'm just saying that usually it's not. So you come down to the question after a while, if people in the field are essentially ignored, why have them there for the purposes of policy? Sure, you can have them there to collect information, which is what they're there for. Obviously, they're there to help further US interest, to meet with people, to go to cocktail parties, to look out for American citizens abroad, to help in immigration and other things, but why do you need as big an embassy

with a policy pretention, if actually all they're doing is just carrying a message, which, in effect, is what it is? So my problem was the fact that Washington policy was made without taking into consideration, information from the field.

Q: Well, or despite information.

FUNDERBURK: Or despite information in the field, right.

Q: You argue, at some length, against Eagleburger and several other officers that you cite, as being "concessionary diplomats," and on several points in the book, you make the statement that, "There is a strange convergence of interest between the US Foreign Service elite and the Romanian communists." Isn't that rather a harsh thing to say about your colleagues and fellow Americans?

FUNDERBURK: Well, if it weren't true as I had observed, it would be pretty harsh. But the guys that I observed there had a very cozy relationship with their communist counterparts, and they seemed to be much more interested in trying to please them and trying to ingratiated themselves to them than they were looking out for American interest. I mean, there were no two ways about it, from my point of view. But, obviously, you know, I'm one person. There were some others who agreed with that, too. I would point out that it was a source of no little satisfaction to me that in the last year and a half, Most Favored Nation status was removed from Romania. So somebody, obviously, in the United States, some of the people, some of the congressmen, some of the religious figures, must have come to the conclusion that Funderburk wasn't totally wrong in saying that this is a monster we're dealing with. He's destroying his country's history and heritage. The people have no free immigration; human rights is terrible. And we shouldn't be rewarding and giving favored treatment to such a character. And yet, it was your Larry Eagleburger, it was your Mark Palmer, it was the other great career diplomats, who have all knowledge, who were saying that this was a great man and we needed him, regardless of what he was doing to anybody. So he could pull a Tiananmen Square every month, and we would still send the

money over there to Ceausescu, because the Foreign Service people know best. But what is the problem now? I mean, obviously, the word got out about this guy. It didn't just get out from David Funderburk.

Q: There is a problem, of course, in the Foreign Service—we all recognize it—of clientitis. But the number of times that you refer to the Foreign Service elite and the pinstripes and so forth in your book, lead me to think that you're implying that there is a measure of disloyalty in the Foreign Service, a measure of attachment to un-American ideas. I get that implication from the way you write about and ask these questions. And if I had been involved in that policy, right or wrong, I would be outraged, if you had implied that I was less loyal to the United States than you.

FUNDERBURK: Right. Well, I certainly . . .

Q: Is that the way you really think about some of those people, like Eagleburger?

FUNDERBURK: Some of those who worked with regard to Eastern Europe certainly fit that category. And clientitis, I can't attribute motives to people, okay? But I can certainly look at results and see what has happened. And so whether people are operating from motives that they think are patriotic or not, I mean, this is different to different people, I realize. But, to them, to some of the people, whether they're Harry Barnes..., the golden boy of the Foreign Service, who wouldn't let me, or virtually any other scholar, into the embassy to get our mail, which we should have gotten by American law. But certainly favored the foreign national employees there who were all reporting to the Romanian KGB. He thought that, like Hartman in Moscow, that you just run an open embassy in a communist country, because you want to project to them that we are different, and we are open, and we have no secrets. And so, as you see, we don't have any now because a lot have been taken.

But I would say that clientitis was rampant in the east European Bureau of the State Department, to the extent that the way up the ladder, to get rewarded in the Foreign Service, in East Europe, East European Bureau, for Mark Palmer and Larry Eagleburger

and John Davis, who's in Poland, that I dealt with quite a bit, and Scanlan and all the rest, was for them to figure out a way to reward the communists that they were dealing with in Eastern Europe. And so they devised these projects and these plans. They had fun sitting with these guys. They winked. They told jokes. They were like their brother or sister. In my view, they lost track of where they were from and what country they were representing, and what the views of most American people are. And many of these people, not all, because I can't make a blanket generalization, many of them were very good friends and allies of mine, and helped me get the message out of what was really happening there. I didn't have the expertise bureaucratically to report everything that was going on, crafted in a State Department style, to have affect. And I had people in the embassy, who saw things the way I did, or at least said that they did, and who assisted me in this process. And they're people that I admire, appreciate, I consider very patriotic Americans.

So I don't make a blanket generalization, but there were many, the ones who seem to be in charge of our policy, who almost made it incumbent upon people who wanted to rise up in the Foreign Service, to not look out for American interest, and not put them first, but put the interest of that client's state first. And this is what I witnessed, and it was very despicable to me. And in the years since that—and I'm outraged by this, by the way—I'm outraged by the fact that I get calls every day of my life from ethnic Romanians and Hungarians and Germans who say that, “We tried to go through the American Embassy and the American Embassy told us to go to hell,” because there were KGB agents working throughout the American Embassy. The Romanian national employees all work for the KGB. Everybody knows that. Ask the CIA, the DIA. I looked at it. I saw it. I know it's true. So when these people go in our embassy to get treatment, in the past, Harry Barnes said, “Will you deal with this person over here, this Monica somebody?” So you go to Monica and Monica tells him, “Go to hell.” Is that representing the best interest of the United States Government? I wouldn't say so. And that person remembers that the rest of their life, that here is America, the symbol of freedom, and we walk in there, and they've got one of Ceausescu's thugs in there, working at the gate, telling me where I can go. This is the

way our embassies operated in Eastern Europe. And it's gotten us into great difficulty in the minds and hearts of the people. And I resent that as an American concerned about our image abroad. I have an entirely different prospective on how we should project that image.

I don't say we close it off and we have fortress America, at all. I'm just as much for open America as anybody. I traveled through the country as often as I could to see people, to show the flag, to show them that America is different. But at the same time, we have to look out for our security interest and our national interest. And I don't think most of these guys, in the department that we were dealing with, did that, and they're the ones running the show today. And so I deeply resent that as an American concerned about the future of freedom.

When I go over there to Eastern Europe and I'm arguing to those people that, “Look, human dignity is important to Americans, and we care about freedom. We care about free immigration. We care about human rights. We care about religious freedom. We're a nation with faith. And we're a nation that believes in the human spirit, and not control over people's minds and bodies by some tyrannical system.” When I say that, it's kind of hard to look them in the eyes and say it when we've got officials in Washington, and in the State Department, who are more concerned about doing a good deed for Ceausescu than they are looking out for America's interest. So, yes, it's a very deep concern for me, and I know it outrages many people in the State Department, but to me it's factual. I'm going to spend the rest of the days of my life trying to get this message out, because I know what I lived and saw there was real. And I have to say that subsequent to my stay there, the two largest Romanian organizations outside of Romania that constitute a million people, elected me the honorary president of each one, and they consider me one who has understood Romanian history and the Romanian reality better than anyone else in our government. So that's a sad thing, but the people that we have running our policy toward that government, right now, don't understand what's going on.

Q: People who are running our policy toward that government right now, the Eastern European people, Eagleburger on down, do not need me to defend them. And I can't defend them anyway because I don't know that much about Eastern Europe. What I would suggest to you, though . . .

FUNDERBURK: They need somebody . . .

Q: Bear in mind that there are differences of opinion, and there's clientitis, and then there's yet, in a whole different ball park, disloyalty.

FUNDERBURK: Right. I didn't say that their intentions were to aid the enemy. And I haven't stated that anywhere, because I don't know what their motives are.

Q: But the implication is there, and that's why I wanted to raise it.

FUNDERBURK: Okay, well, where I state it and what I thought I say very clearly in there, is that the result of what they are doing has the effect of assisting our adversaries, and does not have the effect of looking out for our best interest. So that is very strong, but it's not the same as saying that they have sat down and conspired to work with the enemy against the best interests of the United States, even though some, like Felix Block, may have done that.

Q: And I'm just astonished about that particular case, too. I knew him slightly, years ago. And I'm just astonished. And yet, and of course, they haven't really, yet, hung anything on him, as we speak today.

We're going to have to draw this to a close because we are beginning to run out of time, but let's take, quickly, two or three questions I'd like to ask you. Please evaluate for me, now, leaving aside Eagleburger, the effectiveness of the Foreign Service in the 1980s.

FUNDERBURK: In what sense do you mean? In accomplishing its mission of what?

Q: Representing the United States abroad and effectively informing and advising the Department of State and the Washington establishment.

FUNDERBURK: Well, I would say, in the context of Romania and Eastern Europe, it's been a disaster, because I really don't think that the people formulating our policy—and I know who they are—have used information and evidence from the field, the first hand information and evidence which best reflects what's actually happening in these countries, especially Romania. They haven't used this in the formulation of American policy. Now, in terms of having an embassy that collects information, or having embassies that collect information, they do as good a job as they can do without too many humans. In other words, electronic picking up of information. They do a fairly good job of getting information, but then what good is getting information if you don't know how to use it, and if it never gets to the right people? In terms of trying to look out for the interests of American companies, American professors, American travelers, American tourists, it's a mixed bag. I would say that they're more preoccupied, again, with not offending the host government than they are with looking out for the interests of any particular individual.

Q: In the case of Romania?

FUNDERBURK: In the case of Romania. In terms of trade, in the last eight or nine years in Romania, we have exported less almost yearly. We have imported more. The trade imbalance has grown worse, or greater. And so when looking out for economic or trade interests, we haven't done a very good job of that. Admittedly, it's very difficult to do business with somebody like Ceausescu, and at one point he simply decided, “I'm going to cut off importing stuff from the West,” basically, “and I'm going to dump everything I can on the market there.” And so it's partly a result of what he's done, but we could have stepped in and represented our own interests a little bit better.

Now, in terms of formulating an overall policy for representing America's ideals and principles and beliefs, I really don't think that we've done this to the extent that we should.

The instruments that we have, whether they're RFE or VOA, USIA, the symbolism of the President, the Secretary of State, the people in Eastern Europe, in terms of their statements. We had George Bush in 1983, for example, from the recommendations of Lawrence Eagleburger and Mark Palmer, because I was on board Air Force II with them for part of this journey, we had him go to Vienna and make a statement about our policy vis # vis Eastern Europe, which really disturbed many people in Eastern Europe. And I think it simply reflected the fact that what was really happening there didn't work into our policy. In other words, Bush, in his statement of differentiation in 1983 in Vienna, which he has virtually reiterated in the last year during a similar trick, has shown the United States on the wrong side of humanity, in terms of its dealings with Eastern Europe.

Q: Well, in your terms, then, cozying up too much to the governments in Eastern Europe?

FUNDERBURK: Right. I would look at it this way. And maybe this is the mentality that comes out of the State Department, I don't know. But they're looking at our policy vis # vis Eastern Europe, solely in terms of dealing with the government, government to government, whereas I'm saying we ought to open our minds to the possibility that a little part of the relationship should be the US Government and people to the people directly in communist countries. And that, in as much as this does not interfere with the relationships, you know—in other words, the United States should, and can, speak directly to the people of Romania on occasion about what they feel and believe and what they stand for. And we're afraid to do that now. So our policy is, basically, American Government to Ceausescu. It's not Americans to the people of Romania, who hate Ceausescu. And I think we need to deal with those people. We've tried this to a slight degree in Poland by dealing with elements like Solidarity in the Catholic Church, and I think that's a positive development. But in other places, we haven't really done it. Other than Poland and Hungary, we haven't made the effort that we should to have a relationship with the people in the country. China brings up an example of what's our dilemma there. I mean, you know, we've rewarded Deng Xiaoping, in effect, for massacring students. At the same time, a lot of Americans have been outraged about that and concerned that we don't align

ourselves with the freedom fighters there. Obviously, it's a dilemma. The art of state, craft and diplomacy are dealing with government and government. But I'm just saying there is a place there, if we're looking at history and we're looking at the hearts and souls and minds of people, there's a place where we should deal outside the government channel, on occasion, directly with people who are allied with us in heart and spirit.

Q: Well, that's interesting. I won't go into that much deeper because you're already quite familiar with the USIS function and how it can be used. I won't ask you how that can be improved. Let me just cut to fundamentals, maybe. The Foreign Service exam has been canceled for this year because of controversy about whether it's ethnically biased or racially biased. There have been protests, or court suits, or something of this sort. I think it's being redone, and will be given again next spring. As you know, normally it's given every December, each year. Would you recommend to bright young students at Campbell University that they take the Foreign Service exam? Would you recommend the Foreign Service as a career nowadays?

FUNDERBURK: Well, if someone is interested in diplomacy and foreign affairs and international affairs, certainly I recommend it as one option, and one possibility. I caution them, however, and say that from my point of view, the Foreign Service exam and the Foreign Service, itself, is ideologically biased, not ethnically or racially, but ideologically. So my problem with the Foreign Service exam, both orally and written, from what I understand of it, is that if you don't have the point of view of most of the elite in the Foreign Service, you're not really welcome in the Foreign Service. And basically, they want people who will do the bidding of the elite and people who will be good followers, but not people who are going to be creative, and not people who are going to think for themselves, and not people who have a different point of view. And I think, personally, if we are a democratic country, that we ought to have a Foreign Service—you're talking about the Foreign Service being afraid of offending women and blacks because they don't have enough of them in there. They ought to be afraid of offending the rank-and-file American people. They have unpopularity among the American people because the Foreign Service

does not reflect the points of view of the American people. So, in an objective sense, if you want to look at it that way, why aren't conservative, pro-freedom, anti-communist people who put the interest of this country first, who believe in God, who are religious people, family people, traditionalists, why aren't they allowed into the Foreign Service?

Q: Oh, there are a lot of those in the Foreign Service.

FUNDERBURK: Very few. You'd be surprised. If they're in there, they don't surface too loudly because they don't get up the ladder, certainly not in Eastern Europe. But there are some, admittedly, no question about it. I just don't think they're a majority, and they're not in control of the Foreign Service elite, and they don't rise to the top. Generally speaking, look at every person who is a career Foreign Service officer in whatever bureau you pick, whether it's Latin American Affairs or African or Asian or European, they're going to be from the left of the political spectrum. And I just think you need a balance there, because that reflects what America really is. America is not left wing in its political ideology now, hasn't been throughout the "80s. When is the Foreign Service going to realize this? [chuckles]

Q: You need to, therefore, suggest more strongly to young people of that persuasion to take the exam.

FUNDERBURK: I have, but I said that, keep in mind when you take the exam, unless you frame your answers in the way that the questioners want to hear them, you're not likely to get past the first hurdle.

Q: I've been an examiner. I don't know how I could possibly have slanted anything in the way that you're talking about. And the exam is made—I'm not going to argue about this —the exam is made up by ETS and Princeton. And there have been ethnic or cultural biases, so some people say, and so it's going to be redone and so forth. I don't know how

they're going to get around that, either, so that there's no bias whatever in the exam. It's a very difficult exam, as you know.

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: And it weeds out all but the brightest people. And I don't think it really does weed out all but the brightest, leftist people. That's just my opinion.

FUNDERBURK: [chuckles] Right.

Q: And I'm supposed to be asking the questions, not answering the questions. Your greatest disappointment in the Foreign Service was the inability to get your and the embassy's views on differentiation appreciated fully in Washington?

FUNDERBURK: Right. I would say that.

Q: What gave you your greatest sense of personal achievement while an ambassador?

FUNDERBURK: Well, in a way, it's kind of like the occupation of a professor. You don't always get the satisfaction back from a student who has succeeded, or who has learned a lot from you, maybe, or appreciated what you were saying, until years down the road. And in the same sense, I think after this job was over in 1985, that increasingly, it has been helpful to me to see that we did put a marker down for human rights and human dignity and what America really stands for, and the sympathy of the American people, concerned and understanding of the plight of what's going on inside Romania. My wife and I and children and other people in the embassy traveled through the country quite often. We met those that we could. We spoke out when we could. And subsequent to the position, I've spoken out over radio stations, television, in newspapers and journals and so forth. And most of the Romanian people are aware of this now, and I think most of them appreciate that somebody had the courage to do this. And the greatest satisfaction is in knowing that the people of Romania appreciate that they have a spokesman somewhere in the world

who really understands their miserable plight, and who understands what they've had to suffer through. And so that sense of satisfaction and sense of affinity with the people that we've come to love and care about, despite the oppressive system coming down on them, I think is probably our gratification. Not necessarily anything that we did there in a policy sense, other than to strive on a weekly and a monthly basis to get American officials and American non-officials who were visiting Romania to put a marker down for what was really happening. And we got some to do this. And there were a few who had the courage enough to do it. And I think the fact that we made the effort is something that's well known and something that we're proud of.

Q: Very good. Is there something else, now, that I should ask to—is there some question I failed to bring up that you would like to get on the record here?

FUNDERBURK: I don't think so. You had mentioned earlier talking about some specifics of policy matters, but as you well know, Most Favored Nation status was probably the major policy matter of contention. Every year the Romanian Government wanted to keep it, of course, but they wanted it on a multilateral basis. We tried to ensure that it would stay on an annual basis so that Romania would have to go through the process of hearings and some of the dirty laundry would have to be aired there. One of the major issues that I mentioned in the book, obviously, that came up was the effort by the government to be more heavy handed and to come up with a law that was actually, clearly against the trade agreement between the two countries, and that was the Educational Repayment Decree that they required for any immigrants, $50,000.00 or whatever it was. It depended on how many years of education they had.

Q: Was that set arbitrarily, really, or was it on the basis of some kind of calculation, that they set the amount of money?

FUNDERBURK: It was on the basis of—they had a system for it based on whether it was scientific education, how many years you went to school.

Q: But it was a lot of money?

FUNDERBURK: It was a lot of money. It was in some cases, for medical doctor, scientist, engineer and so forth.

Q: Well, we could go on at some length about those specifics, but what we're trying to get here is sort of overall issue oriented, and we're trying to get information that is not available elsewhere . . .

FUNDERBURK: Right.

Q: . . . in the official record, or in published form. And so I think that you have given us quite a bit of that, and I appreciate your time. I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you.

FUNDERBURK: Thank you very much.

Q: No, I thank you.

End of interview